

Claims

- [c1] 1. A method for managing interrupts in an instant messaging application, comprising:
receiving an interrupt request from an interrupting contact during an instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts; and
interrupting the instant messaging conversation in response to a predetermined one of the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking relative to an interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts or an interrupting conversation having a higher interrupt priority ranking compared to an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c2] 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising selecting a precedence between interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting contact relative to the interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts and the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting conversation relative to the interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c3] 3. The method of claim 1, wherein interrupting the in-

stant messaging conversation comprises interrupting the instant messaging conversation in response to the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking higher than each of the at least two contacts.

- [c4] 4. The method of claim 1, wherein interrupting the instant messaging conversation comprises interrupting the instant messaging conversation in response to the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking at least as high as each of the at least two contacts.
- [c5] 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising sending a contact busy message to the interrupting contact in response to one of the interrupting contact having an interrupt priority ranking no higher than each of the at least two contacts or the interrupting conversation having an interrupt priority ranking no higher than the interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c6] 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - presenting a graphical user interface (GUI) representation of the interrupting conversation in a foreground of a display in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation; and
 - transferring a keyboard focus to a type-in box of the interrupting conversation in response to interrupting the

instant messaging conversation.

- [c7] 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting a graphical user interface (GUI) representation of the instant messaging conversation in a background of a display in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.
- [c8] 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising sending an interrupt notification to any of the at least two contacts of the instant messaging conversation not contacted by the interrupting contact in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.
- [c9] 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising resuming the instant messaging conversation in response to the interrupting conversation being completed.
- [c10] 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising setting an instant messaging conversation priority.
- [c11] 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising selectively blocking interrupts.
- [c12] 12. The method of claim 11, further comprising overriding an interrupts block.
- [c13] 13. The method of claim 1, further comprising assigning an interrupt priority ranking to all contacts.

- [c14] 14. The method of claim 13, wherein assigning an interrupt priority ranking comprises one of assigning the interrupt priority ranking by placing all contacts in a pre-determined order in a contact list or auxiliary contact list or by assigning a contact priority number to each contact in the contact list.
- [c15] 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising deriving an interrupt priority ranking for each contact from a Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) or from a reporting chain.
- [c16] 16. A method for managing interrupts in an instant messaging application, comprising:
 - receiving an interrupt request from an interrupting contact during an instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts;
 - interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on a set of interrupt rules; and
 - sending an interrupt blocked message to the interrupting contact in response to interrupts being selectively blocked.
- [c17] 17. The method of claim 16, wherein interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on a set of interrupt rules comprises permitting the instant messaging con-

versation to be interrupted in response to interrupts being selectively permitted and the interrupting contact having an interrupt priority ranking at least as high as an interrupt priority ranking of each of at least two contacts.

- [c18] 18. The method of claim 16, wherein interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on a set of interrupt rules comprises permitting the instant messaging conversation to be interrupted in response to interrupts being selectively permitted and an interrupting conversation having a higher interrupt priority ranking than an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c19] 19. The method of claim 16, wherein interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on a set of interrupt rules comprises interrupting the instant messaging conversation in response to a predetermined one of one of the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking at least as high as a interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts or an interrupting conversation having an interrupt priority ranking at least as high as an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c20] 20. The method of claim 16, further comprising present-

ing a GUI representation of the interrupting conversation in a foreground of a display in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.

- [c21] 21. The method of claim 16, further comprising sending an interrupt notification to any of the at least two contacts of the instant messaging conversation not contacted by the interrupting contact in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.
- [c22] 22. A system for managing interrupts in an instant messaging application, comprising:
means for receiving an interrupt from an interrupting contact during an instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts; and
a set of interrupt rules associated with the instant messaging application to control any interrupts to the instant messaging conversation between the at least two contacts.
- [c23] 23. The system of claim 22, wherein the set of interrupt rules comprises a rule permitting the instant messaging conversation to be interrupted in response to interrupts being selectively permitted and the interrupting contact having an interrupt priority ranking at least as high as an interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts.

- [c24] 24. The system of claim 22, wherein the set of interrupt rules comprises a rule permitting the instant messaging conversation to be interrupted in response to interrupts being selectively permitted and an interrupting conversation having a higher interrupt priority ranking than an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c25] 25. The system of claim 22, wherein the set of interrupt rules comprises a rule permitting interruption of the instant messaging conversation in response to a predetermined one of one of the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking at least as high as a interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts or an interrupting conversation having an interrupt priority ranking at least as high as an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c26] 26. The system of claim 22, further comprising means for presenting a GUI to a contact to set a conversation priority.
- [c27] 27. The system of claim 22, further comprising means for selectively blocking interrupts.
- [c28] 28. The system of claim 22, further comprising means for sending a contact busy message to the interrupting

contact in response to one of the interrupting contact having an interrupt priority ranking no higher than each of the at least two contacts or the interrupting conversation having an interrupt priority ranking no higher than the interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.

- [c29] 29. The system of claim 22, further comprising means for sending an interrupts blocked message to the interrupting contact in response to interrupts being selectively blocked with respect to the instant messaging conversation.
- [c30] 30. A method of making a system for managing interrupts in an instant messaging application, comprising: providing means for receiving an interrupt from an interrupting contact during an instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts; and forming a set of interrupt rules associated with the instant messaging application to control any interrupts to the instant messaging conversation between the at least two contacts.
- [c31] 31. The method of claim 30, wherein forming the set of interrupt rules comprises forming a rule to permit the instant messaging conversation to be interrupted in response to interrupts being selectively permitted and the

interrupting contact having an interrupt priority ranking at least as high as an interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts.

- [c32] 32. The method of claim 30, wherein forming the set of interrupt rules comprises forming a rule to permit the instant messaging conversation to be interrupted in response to interrupts being selectively permitted and an interrupting conversation having a higher interrupt priority ranking than an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c33] 33. The method of claim 30, wherein forming the set of interrupt rules comprises forming a rule to permit interruption of the instant messaging conversation in response to a predetermined one of one of the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking at least as high as a interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts or an interrupting conversation having an interrupt priority ranking at least as high as an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c34] 34. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method, comprising:
receiving an interrupt request from an interrupting con-

tact during an instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts; and interrupting the instant messaging conversation in response to a predetermined one of the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking at least as high as an interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts or an interrupting conversation having a higher interrupt priority ranking compared to an interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.

- [c35] 35. The computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 34, further comprising sending a contact busy message to the interrupting contact in response to one of the interrupting contact having an interrupt priority ranking no higher than each of the at least two contacts or the interrupting conversation having an interrupt priority ranking no higher than the interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.
- [c36] 36. The computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 34, further comprising:
presenting a graphical user interface (GUI) representation of the interrupting conversation in a foreground of a display in response to interrupting the instant messaging

conversation; and
transferring a keyboard focus to a type-in box of the in-
terrupting conversation in response to interrupting the
instant messaging conversation.

- [c37] 37. The computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 34, further comprising sending an interrupt notification to any of the at least two contacts of the instant messaging conversation not contacted by the interrupting contact in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.
- [c38] 38. The computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 34, further comprising presenting a GUI to a user to set an instant messaging conversation priority.
- [c39] 39. The computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 34, further comprising presenting a GUI to a user to selectively block interrupts.